July 1900 — M — 5.25 De La Mare.

A STRAY LAMB FOLDED

By
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There are always a few girls in the Home Industrial School for whom we do not ask scholarships, but by being very economical we can save enough from the scholarship fund to support them. The reason these are not assigned to the care of any society or any individual is because they have few qualities to recommend them as worthy beneficiaries—at least, none I can write about; and, besides, as we have not scholarships for all, and there is more uncertainty of these unpromising girls remaining with us, it is best their support should come from the general fund. Yet while here they get such a hold on the hearts and the sympathy of the faculty that we cannot come to the point of dismissing them from the school. Such an one was our Effie May Brown, who was in our care more than two years. I shall try to give you a little sketch of her life, because Effie belonged to all of you who have had scholarships here since December 1, 1897, the day she first came to us.

One Sabbath afternoon Col. Bingham came to my office and sent for me. He apologized for making a business call on Sabbath, but he added, "It did me no good to go to church this morning, nor could I have any peace this afternoon except in trying to do something to snatch

a girl who lives near me from the highway to destruction. So I must needs come to you." Then he told me of Effie May Brown and described the life in the cabin on Bingham Heights. Her mother, after a lingering illness, had just died; her father had long been a drunkard, living and acting more like a brute than a man. The girl must be gotten away. He agreed to see that part of her support was provided for a year by friends in the Southern Church here. I demurred, because I did not like to bring Effie into the family of our nice girls, but finally concluded to receive her. She came the next day—this girl of sixteen, no larger than a child of twelve years. Such a forlorn, homely, emaciated, dirty, tobacco-saturated, whisky-soaked, diseased little specimen we had seldom seen—had we seen her, could we have had the courage to receive her even in Christ's name and for His sake? Some of the very best girls in the house welcomed her graciously and helped to get her body into a presentable condition. Her ill temper and disgusting habits were not so easily changed as her clothing, yet withal she had a quaint, fascinating, interesting way which won many friends.

When two or three weeks later her father, more than half drunk, came one Sabbath for her, making the plea that he wanted her to go with him to a certain place, "Jist to rejoice with Cindy (her little sister) fer a couple er hours," I saw that without losing what hold had been gained on her, and without jeopardizing the good will of her father toward the school, I could not refuse to let her go. An hour was set for her return, but I feared we never would see Effie again. Great was my surprise and gratification when she kept that appointment, almost to a minute. She came to me at once on her return to see if she were

on time and to report her "rejoicin's with Cindy."

This little untrained waif was a constant care to the teachers and the girls who had charge of her. I might recount many adventures met with during the civilizing process, but the thing which stands out clearest in my mind was an episode with a knife—a large, old, ugly pocket knife which Effie had brought among her queer treasures. One of her room-mates had been attacked by her, and both girls, with the knife, were brought to my office. Dismissing the unoffending victim, I kept the culprit and the knife, and when I thought I had reached the right point of instruction, I flung the knife into the bed of hot coals in the grate. This put the little animal into a rage, because I had "plumb done burned up Granny's knife." Her angry feelings soothed, for the first time in her life, she began to feel the need of restraining her passions.

Months passed without Effie's apparently gaining anything in intellectual development, but love and kindness were gaining control of her passionate heart—for she could love passionately as well as hate violently. We learned something of her ancestry on her mother's side and found some of them well-born. In the atmosphere of our Christian school, the latent gifts and graces inherited from her mother began to assert themselves. Now she never met a teacher in the hall or on the stairs without stopping to make her quaint courtsey or to speak. The least favor was politely requested and gratefully acknowledged. She never left my office or any teacher's room, even if she came on errands, many times a day, without saying goodby; sometimes quite formally shaking hands.

In order that she might, from a distance, get a truer view of us and of her relation to us, I

arranged to have her spend the summer vacation with her grandmother, who was then living with a widowed daughter-in-law. The family would not have Effie live with them, knowing as they did of her violent temper. An old mill about ten miles from Asheville was fixed up for Effie and her grandmother, where they spent the three months. I went out on horseback to see them and found the old mill a romantic, wholesome sort of a place. I quite envied them living among those interesting water-wheels, and over the rippling Hominy Creek, in dry weather, and amid its roaring and rushing in times of freshet. I learned from the neighbors that Effie had appropriated us all. We existed in large measure for her sake. Many times a day her words were "my school, my teachers, my mates, my house, etc." On the day school opened she returned. Her box could not be brought at once, but she carried a package containing night clothes, tooth brush, comb—her ladylike instincts dictating that these should be at hand.

Miss Allison, her teacher, tells me she never was able to memorize the Scripture correctly, as the other girls do, but she gave heed unto the Word, and its entrance gave light to her heart, mind and countenance. During the Week of Prayer, 1899, she confessed Christ, and her life ever after showed she had indeed been made a new creature in Him.

The summer vacation of 1899 came and Effie's cough was constantly growing worse. What could we do with the child? It was not right to keep a consumptive among our girls; in fact, Dr. Burroughs forbade it. The grandmother had gone to Georgia to live with a son, and although Dr. Campbell would have cheerfully paid Effie's railroad fare to that state, the grandmother could not be found. After much persuasion the same aunt who would not con-

sent to take her the summer Effie lived in the mill, agreed now to keep her for this summer vacation. In the fall we would see what could be done.

She came to the school in October, during my absence, looking more frail than ever and eagerly expectant. Was there any place for her but the county poor house—a most wretched, demoralizing place for any person, and especially for a young girl. None could think of her going there. Miss Johns found a cousin of Effie's mother living about two miles from the school—a good, kind woman, whose husband is an honest, upright, generous man, but too poor to add one more member to his already large family without compensation. We could not legitimately set aside any of the school funds to meet this need. I appealed to Dr. Campbell and Col. Bingham, and these two, together with the teachers, made provision for Effie for three months—the length of time the relative could foresee it was right for them to keep her in their family. The teachers and girls called often to see Effie and found her happy and well content. No word was ever said to her about the probability of a change of place, which must have come on January 15th, had not the loving hand of her Heavenly Father led her gently into the mansion prepared for her on the 6th of that month. No one thought of her going so soon, as she had been about the house as usual until that day, when she kept her bed. Her mind wandered at times; several times she said, "If my teachers was hyer, they would make we well again." She sang some of the hymns learned at school. Later, in her polite, deferential way, not wanting to be a trouble to anyone even by dying, she said, "Aunt Lou, good Aunt Lou (this was the name she gave her cousin), ef I should happen ter drap off youens mustn't think hard

of me, cause youens'll know I couldn't nary help it."

The message of her illness had hardly reached me when it was followed by another stating her death. Miss Heydenburk and Miss Dean searched our school wardrobe for suitable burial clothing, and Miss Johnstone and I went to help prepare the body for burial, When all was in readiness at the house that Saturday evening, we went to carry to Dr. Campbell and Col. Bingham the news of Effie's call to her eternal home, and to consult them concerning her burial. Dr. Campbell had a place on the program of a very important children's meeting which he would have given up if necessary in order to hold the funeral service, but I was able to make other arrangements. Col. Bingham said, "My men know where Effie's mother was buried and will dig a grave besider her and have it ready any hour you say to-morrow." Next the undertaker was visited, a plain coffin chosen and an order left not to bring the hearse, but their common wagon, as we could not afford the more expensive one. When we reached the home at the time of the service we found the best hearse and a better coffin than had been ordered—the undertaker felt constrained to do a service in Christ's name for this child.

Mr. Southern, a Baptist minister—pastor of the Todd family—preached the funeral sermon. The teachers and girls sang. Little Cindy was there with the kind man and woman who two years ago adopted her, and many of the neighbors came in to show honor to the memory of this dear child who had twined herself about their hearts as about ours. The whole service was an inspiration to us all. Some members of the Todd family, Cindy and her adopted parents, some of the Home Industrial teachers and Dr. Lawrence, who conducted the service

at the grave, went to the little graveyard four miles distant. We did not expect to find anyone at the grave, but there was a large company. The winter afternoon was perfect, the grave in a beautiful spot on a high hill. It was noted also that from Effie's last resting place could be seen distinctly the school she loved, the very windows of the room where she had been so happy.

When I think of the physical condition, the natural, mental and moral characteristics of this child, the change wrought by the Holy Spirit's applying the truth to her heart, there comes to me in clearer vision than ever before something of the meaning of that word, "The glory which shall be revealed in us." And when I consider that for the care and safe folding of this wayward, wilful, lost lamb, the Good Shepherd called into service all of you who have scholarships here—scattered as you are from Florida to Oregon, from New York to California, and to your help added that of the Southern Presbyterian Church in Asheville, one of the congregation bringing her contribution from the continent of Europe—that familiar picture of the Good Shepherd with the one lamb in His arms must ever have a deeper meaning for me. I shall know henceforth that His loving, tender care is over each, just as it was over Effie, as if she were the only little lamb in all the world needing His care. If we, the under-shepherds, were better able to answer honestly and satisfactorily His searching question concerning our love for Him, and were willing to follow His plain direction, how many more myriads of lost lambs would be safe in His arms?

FLORENCE STEPHENSON.

Home Industrial School,
Asheville, N. C., March 12, 1900.

No. 215-1stEd.-3-1900.

July 5, 1900.— 10 M.— 10.— Willett.

You are cordially invited

to attend a Missionary Meeting,

to be beld on tbe

at o'clock, in Church.

The presence of every woman connected with the church and congregation is desired, and you are requested to extend this invitation to your friends.